

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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P 021454Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8820

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 4050

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJ: HOSTILITY OF ETHIOPIAN GOVT MEDIA

REF: ADDIS ABABA 3655

1. DESPITE FURTHER REPRESENTATIONS BY ME AND OTHERS, INCLUDING TO FONMIN LAST WEEK, EPMG GOVT-CONTROLLED MEDIA OUTPUT STILL CONTAINS NO BALANCING MATERIALS TO MARXIST RHETORIC, AND ARTICLE ON AID INPUTS MENTIONED PARA REFTEL HAS NOT BEEN PUBLISHED.

2. UNLESS DEPT HAS OBJECTIONS OR ALTERNATIVES, I PROPOSE TO SEND FOLLOWING LETTER TO HEAD OF STATE CHAIRMAN TEFERI BANTE: BEGIN TEXT.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN:

YOU WILL RECALL THAT SOME WEEKS AGO I EXPRESSED TO YOU MY CONCERN ABOUT ANTI-AMERICAN ITEMS APPEARING IN YOUR GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED PRESS. I HAVE ALSO DISCUSSED THIS SUBJECT WITH MAJ. SISAY HABTE, AND WITH FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS INCLUDING THE FOREIGN MINISTER.

YOU WILL UNDERSTAND THAT MY CONCERN STEMS FROM THE INTEREST OF MY GOVERNMENT IN PRESERVING FRIENDLY BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH ETHIOPIA. I DO NOT REFER AT ALL TO YOUR MEDIA COVERAGE OF INTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS OR POLICIES IN
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ETHIOPIA, NOR TO YOUR COUNTRY'S FRIENDLY MEDIA TREATMENT OF

OTHER NATIONS.

YOUR INFORMATION MEDIA HAVE, IN THE PAST FEW WEEKS, ATTACKED PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS AS AMERICAN INTELLIGENCE AGENTS, HAVE SIMILARLY CRITICIZED AMERICAN MISSIONARIES, TERMING THEM IMPERIALISTS AND NEO-COLONIALISTS AGENTS AND HAVE ALLEGED THAT AMERICAN DROUGHT-RELATED ASSISTANCE IS UNDERMINING ETHIOPIAN SOCIALISM. THERE HAS BEEN A RECENT INCREASE IN VIOLENCE DIRECTED AGAINST OFFICIAL AND PRIVATE AMERICANS, BOTH IN ADDIS ABABA AND IN THE COUNTRYSIDE. ON MARCH 31, AN AMERICAN MISSIONARY WOMEN IN ALAMATA WAS SHOT AND WOUNDED IN HER HOME BY AN ETHIOPIAN, FOR NO APPARENT REASON. IT SEEMS MORE THAN A COINCIDENCE THAT THIS INCIDENT OCCURRED FOLLOWING SEVERAL HARSHLY WORDED RADIO ETHIOPIA CONDEMNATIONS OF MISSIONARY ACTIVITIES IN ETHIOPIA, INCLUDING ONE SUCH BROADCAST ON THE EVENING OF MARCH 31, SHORTLY BEFORE THE WOMAN WAS ATTACKED. STONINGS OF AMERICAN VEHICLES ON THE MAIN STREET NEAR THE EMBASSY HAVE ALSO INCREASED AGAIN, DESPITE REPEATED EMBASSY REQUESTS FOR PROTECTION.

MORE GENERALLY, FOR SOME MONTHS THERE HAS BEEN NO INDICATION IN YOUR MEDIA THAT YOUR GOVERNMENT WISHES TO CONTINUE FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES, ALTHOUGH I HAVE BEEN ASSURED PRIVATELY THAT IS THE CASE. IN THE ABSENCE OF ANY PUBLIC INDICATIONS, AND BECAUSE OF THE CONTINUED PRESENTATION OF ANTI-AMERICAN MATERIALS, SOME OF YOUR CITIZENS MAY BELIEVE THEY ARE CARRYING OUT THE WISHES OF THE GOVERNMENT WHEN THEY MAKE PHYSICAL OR VERBAL ATTACKS ON AMERICANS. THE CONSEQUENCES TO OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS, IN TERMS OF ATTITUDES IN THE UNITED STATES AND IN ETHIOPIA, AS WELL AS IN INCREASED DANGERS TO AMERICAN CITIZENS, SHOULD BE OF AS MUCH CONCERN TO YOU AS THEY ARE TO ME. YOUR GOVERNMENT, FOR EXAMPLE, HAS REPEATEDLY MADE CLEAR TO ME ITS EXPECTATION THAT COMMITMENTS ENTERED INTO WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF OUR TRADITIONAL FRIENDLY BILATERAL RELATIONS BE CARRIED OUT BY US WITHIN AGREED-UPON TIME FRAMES. WE HAVE REPEATEDLY ACCOMMODATED THE WISHES OF YOUR GOVERNMENT. WE DO BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT SUCH MANIFESTATIONS OF OUR FRIENDSHIP FOR ETHIOPIA DESERVE NO LESS BY WAY OF RECIPROCITY. CONFIDENTIAL

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I CANNOT HELP BUT POINT OUT THAT FRIENDSHIP CAN NOT BE A ONE-WAY STREET.

IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE SOME BALANCE IN ETHIOPIAN MEDIA, AND IN LINE WITH STATEMENTS BY ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS THAT YOUR GOVERNMENT WISHES TO CONTINUE FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH THE U.S., MY EMBASSY DRAFTED A SUMMARY OF U.S. ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO ETHIOPIA, PINNED TO THIS YEAR'S 25TH ANNIVERSARY

OF THE BEGINNING OF THAT ASSISTANCE. THAT DRAFT HAS BEEN PRESENTED TO YOUR LEADING NEWSPAPERS, THE STAFFS OF WHICH INDICATED THAT THEY WOULD BE PLEASED TO PUBLISH IT. HOWEVER FOR MORE THAN THREE WEEKS NO PUBLICATION HAS OCCURRED, AND WE ARE INFORMED THAT "HIGHER AUTHORITY" DOES NOT WISH TO APPROVE PUBLICATION. I CAN ONLY TAKE THIS AS INDICATING THAT YOUR GOVERNMENT'S PRIVATELY EXPRESSED POLICY OF MAINTAINING FRIENDLY RELATIONS IS NOT BEING TRANSLATED INTO APPROPRIATE ACTIONS TO INFORM YOUR PEOPLE OF THAT POLICY. SUCH A DECISION WOULD ALSO BE IN VIOLATION OF THE OBLIGATION OF YOUR GOVERNMENT, IN A BASIC AGREEMENT INVOLVING AID, "TO GIVE FULL PUBLICITY TO THE OBJECTIVES AND PROGRESS" OF AMERICAN ASSISTANCE.

I DO NOT, OF COURSE, INSIST ON THE PUBLICATION OF THIS PARTICULAR ARTICLE OR ON ANY PARTICULAR FORMAT. HOWEVER, IF ITS CONTENTS FAILS TO APPEAR IN ANY FORM, I AND MY GOVERNMENT WILL ACCORDINGLY DRAW ADVERSE CONCLUSIONS. LIKEWISE, I WOULD NOT CONSIDER THE PUBLICATION OF ANY SINGLE ARTICLE AS BY ITSELF REDRESSING THE INBALANCE IN THE MEDIA THAT HAS BEEN SO OBVIOUS IN RECENT MONTHS.

IN WRITING THIS LETTER I AM CONVEYING NOT ONLY MY OWN VIEWS BUT ALSO THE CONCERNS OF MY GOVERNMENT. I HOPE HIS IMPORTANT MATTER WILL RECEIVE YOUR GOVERNMENT'S URGENT ATTENTION.

SINCERELY,

ARTHUR HUMMEL END TEXT

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3. FYI: VIOLENT INCIDENTS REFERRED TO INCLUDE SOME AGAINST PCV'S IN OUTLYING PLACES, AND SOME AGAINST AMCIT MISSIONARIES INCLUDING MARCH 31 SHOOTING OF AMERICAN WOMAN (DETAILS BY SEPTTEL). WE CANNOT PROVE CONNECTION WITH HOSTILE MEDIA CONTENT, NOR HAVE THE PERPRETRATORS INDICATED THEY HAVE BEEN STIMULATED BY IT. NEVERTHELESS, TO INDICATE, AS I DO, A CONNECTION IN MY OWN MIND IS NOT STRETCHING THE FACTS. QUOTE OF BASIC AGREEMENT COMES FROM POINT FOUR AGREEMENT JUNE 27, 1951. END FYI. HUMMEL

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